

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02
STR-07 /052 W
-----012143 102207Z /61

R 091413Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7554
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY, FAS FOR HARRISON,
OYLOE, RIESZ
WARSAW, BELGRADE, BONN AND MOSCOW FOR AGATTACHES

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, GE
SUBJ: MORE INDICATIONS OF GDR MEAT SHORTAGE

REF: BERLIN 3797

1. DURING PAST WEEK, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE HEARD
INCREASING NUMBER OF STORIES FROM CONTACTS IN EAST
GERMAN COMMUNITY AND FROM OTHER DIPLOMATS STATIONED
IN GDR TO THE EFFECT THAT MEAT SHORTAGES ARE BEING
EXPERIENCED IN MANY LOCATIONS IN GDR. SOME RESTAURANTS
REPORTEDLY HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ADEQUATE
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SUPPLY OF RED MEAT, AND INDIVIDUAL CONSUMERS REPORTED
SHORTAGES, PARTICULARLY OF BETTER CUTS. SOME HAVE EVEN
REPORTED THAT LOCAL RATIONING PLANS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

2. EXPLANATIONS OF MEAT SHORTAGES GENERALLY REVOLVE
ABOUT NEED FOR GDR TO EXPORT MEAT. THESE EXPLANATIONS
INCLUDE CONTENTION THAT GDR MUST EXPORT MEAT TO WESTERN

COUNTRIES FOR HARD CURRENCY. HOWEVER, IN MOST CASES, PEOPLE ARE BLAMING SHORTAGE ON REQUIREMENT FOR GDR TO EXPORT TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. DESTINATIONS INCLUDE POLAND, ANGOLA AND CUBA, WHERE AMPLE SUPPLIES OF MEAT WERE ALLEGEDLY REQUIRED FOR BROTHERHOOD WEEK.

3. REFTTEL REFERS TO COMMENTS OF PARTY CHIEF HONECKER CONCERNING FASTER-THAN-EXPECTED GROWTH IN CONSUMPTION OF MEAT. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD DIRECTLY FROM MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS THAT CURRENT CONSUMPTION LEVELS, CLAIMED TO BE AS HIGH AS 80 KGS. PER CAPITA FOR RED MEAT, ARE AT LEVELS WHICH WERE PLANNED FOR 1980. WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THIS TELLS THE FULL STORY, AND IT MAY BE MORE EXPEDIENT FOR GDR GOVERNMENT TO CLAIM THAT INCREASED DEMAND IS CAUSING SHORTAGES RATHER THAN EXCESSIVE EXPORTS OR SHORTFALLS IN PRODUCTION, PERHAPS CAUSED BY RISE IN SLAUGHTER RATES CAUSED BY 1976 DROUGHT.

4. WHILE THIS SITUATION HAS CAUSED AN INCREASE IN COMPLAINTS AND GRUMBLING, IT DOES NOT CURRENTLY APPEAR TO BE SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO CAUSE POLITICAL STRAINS. CONSUMPTION OF MEAT IN GDR IS, OF COURSE, STILL FAR HIGHER THAN IN ALL OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND NOT FAR BELOW THAT OF LEADING WESTERN NATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, THE GDR POPULATION HAS GREAT SENSITIVITY TO REAL OR IMAGINED SHORTAGES AND IN AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ECONOMY WITH FIXED PRICES, THE IMPACT OF SHORTFALLS IN SUPPLY OR EXPANSION OF DEMAND IS MAGNIFIED. THE SPOT SHORTAGES COULD CAUSE SOME ADJUSTMENT IN GDR PRODUCTION OR TRADE POLICY, PARTICULARLY IF THEY SHOULD BECOME MORE SERIOUS. BOLEN

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